

Frank Andrew Lee

August 14, 1901 — September 25, 1999

Professor Emeritus Frank Lee was born in Seattle, Washington, on August 14, 1901, the only child of Frank and Amelia Staengel Lee. He died on September 25, 1999, at the age of 98, in Waterloo, New York.

He received his B.S. degree in 1923, and M.S. degree in 1926 from the University of Washington, where he also received the Ph.D. degree. For a brief time, he worked as a chemist for the State of Washington, and then he joined Duquesne University as an Assistant Professor of Pharmacology, attaining the rank of Associate Professor. An increasing interest in food chemistry led him to Leland Stanford University as a Research Associate in the Food Research Institute. Prior to his joining Cornell University, he was a chemist at Hunt Brothers Packing Company in San Francisco. In 1936, he was appointed Assistant Professor of Chemistry in the Division of Chemistry at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. This division merged with Bacteriology to become the Department of Food Science and Technology, and it was from this department that Frank retired in 1967.

He was a member of the American Chemical Society, and was very active in the Institute of Food Technologists, especially the Western New York Section where he was a founding member, and served as Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman, and Councilor over a period of years. Lee was on the editorial boards of the Institute's two major publications, *Food Technology* and the *Journal of Food Research*. Additionally, he was a member of Phi Lambda Upsilon and Sigma Xi. Professor Lee traveled extensively in Europe, presenting lectures at international symposia on food and biological chemistry.

As Professor of Chemistry, Lee conducted research on the blanching and freezing of fruits and vegetables when that industry was in its infancy. In addition to his work on vitamin retention and changes, he was best known for his studies on the oxidation of lipids in vegetables and in explaining the role of oxidation and changes in the deterioration of frozen fruits and vegetables, particularly peas, snap beans, soybeans and carrots. His work on lipids extended to studies on red meats and poultry. Professor Lee had more than 65 peer-reviewed scientific articles published during his career plus numerous review articles and bulletins. He wrote the textbook, *Basic Food Chemistry*. A second edition was published in 1983.

Throughout his career, he carried out a good deal of laboratory work himself. He had little regard for time of day. New night watchmen were always alerted about the food chemistry professor who would often work in his laboratory at all hours of the night.

He was a hunter and a fisherman. The Adirondacks was his favorite area for hunting, since during his hunting years, there were relatively few deer in the Finger Lakes region. He often got small hunting parties together to try their luck in the mountains. A passion for fishing was satisfied by taking advantage of Geneva's location on Seneca Lake. His hunting was complemented by an interest in conservation, shown by his long-term support of the Sierra Club.

Another of Frank's interests was in cooking, specializing in pastries. He claimed it was the artistic side of food chemistry. One particular pastry that he liked to make was Kaiser Zahne Torte, a very nice Viennese type cake with lots of whipped cream and fruit. He had a good sweet tooth.

A long interest in antiques resulted in a fine collection that eventually made up about half the furnishings of his apartment. He was particularly proud of a Chippendale sofa he had acquired in Pennsylvania. A love of books led to the creation of a private library containing many items relating to ancient Egypt.

Frank made a lot of trips after he retired. The most extensive of those were to Egypt, Iran, China, Russia and Germany. Many people at the Experiment Station were treated to a gourmet dinner made by Frank, followed by slides of his travels.

He was a real bookworm. If he was not in his office or laboratory, the place to look for him was a back table in the library surrounded by books and journals. Aiding him in his insistence on keeping current with the literature was his fluency in reading French and German. Later in his career, he taught himself Russian. Frank would become quite upset when journals were canceled, as during periods of budget cuts, particularly since the first to go were often German or French chemical journals of special interest to workers in food science.

After he retired, he spent a good part of his time in the Experiment Station Library. It became his main contact with his colleagues and friends. It was a place where he felt comfortable, where he could see people without having to make prior arrangements. His regard for the library was reflected in his generous bequest to the Experiment Station Library for the express purpose of bolstering the journal collection. The library has since been named the Frank A. Lee Library.

While Frank Lee was a very private person, he was a familiar, friendly, and well-regarded fixture at the Experiment Station and in Geneva. He has left a legacy of classic good manners and generosity that will keep him in our minds for many years to come.